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**JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL**

**BUILDING THE OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC
WARFIGHTER**

BY

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

Signature: _____

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ABSTRACT

The Department of Defense is currently executing an expansive transformation throughout the joint community. One of the critical aspects of this transformation is the education of officers and preparation of officers to assume strategic and operational leadership and command positions throughout the Combatant Commands.

Officer development is the responsibility of each Service. Unfortunately, this does not prepare the officer to assume the role of a strategic or operational commander in a joint command. The joint strategic or operational commander can no longer be developed independently by each Service. His development must be a comprehensive and intentional blending of joint and service competencies and traits, warfighting experience, self-development, and institutional training and education.

This paper will study the competencies and traits required of the strategic and operational commander in the information age, assess obstacles to the development of joint strategic commanders, and provide recommendations for the service and joint integrated development of joint officers in order to develop the best prepared joint strategic and operational commander possible.

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I. Introduction.

A man who can manage the operation of an airborne division or a carrier task force is a highly competent professional. The officer who can direct the complex activities of a combined operation involving large-scale sea, air, and land forces is at the top of his vocation.
(Samuel P. Huntington, (2001) *The Soldier and the State*, p.12)

On September 15, 1941, General George C. Marshall briefed Henry Stimson, Secretary of War, of his plan to begin a purge of incompetent officers in preparation for possible future American involvement in the European war. General Marshall needed to create openings for officers who demonstrated the potential and ability to grow with the rapidly expanding Army. General Marshall intended to include General officers, who were incompetent or over age, in this purge. (Puryear, Edgar F, Jr. (1992), p.90)

In 1986, Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act. Goldwater-Nichols was the result of Congressional frustration with military performance in the late 1970's and 1980's. Military failure during the 1980 Desert One Iranian hostage rescue mission resulted in strong Congressional oversight. Analysis of our successful 1983 Operation Urgent Fury indicated deep underlying joint issues which needed to be addressed. These operations exposed numerous problems with joint operability, equipment and procedural compatibility, and a complete inability for the Services to put aside service prejudice, culture, and jealousies to best achieve the mission. The Goldwater-Nichols Act initiated an incredible military reform process which changed not only the chain of command, but also how we would fight, and just as important, how we would train and educate officers in joint operations.

Our military has traveled a long way from the need to purge incompetent senior leaders in 1941, the national embarrassment of Desert One, and the criticized actions of Operation Urgent Fury to become the most professional and respected military in the world. Our recent campaigns in Operation Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom were demonstrations of flexibility, competency, lethality, professionalism, and “jointness” of United States military action. As one surveys potential adversaries on the conventional battlefield, he would most likely determine that the United States military is without peer.

Our ability to dominate the conventional fight is something every member of the Armed Forces can be proud. Yet, the military that trains only to re-win past victories is destined to failure in the next fight. While each service of the military spent the past four to six years looking hard at itself and attempting to transform itself to meet the needs of the 21st century, the Secretary of Defense placed the Department of Defense on a path of Joint Transformation. The strategic transformation of the Armed Forces is outlined in the Department of Defense publication, *Military Transformation: A Strategic Approach*. One of the four pillars in the Transformation Campaign Plan is titled “Developing Transformational Capabilities.” A critical requirement to achieve the objective of Developing Transformational Capabilities is the Transformation of Joint Education.

This culture requires a fundamentally revised approach to Joint professional military education. Joint education must prepare our leaders both to conduct operations as a coherently Joint force and to think their way through uncertainty.
(*Military Transformation*, 2003, p.27)

Educating and changing how leaders and commanders think about integrating and fighting the joint force underpins our entire joint transformation.

Although the Department of Defense and the Services initiated transformation in the Armed Forces, transformation of Joint professional military education has received additional scrutiny. Just as Congress provided the impetus for Defense reform in 1986 with Goldwater-Nichols, Congress is now providing direction for a revamping of joint professional military education. Currently, the Department of Defense is facing an ever increasing criticism and demand for action by Congress to develop a strategic approach to Joint officer development. In March of 2003, the General Accounting Office issued a report reinforcing Congress' concerns. The report was aptly titled *A Strategic Approach is needed to Improve Joint Officer Development*. The report indicated the need for the Department of Defense (DOD) to readdress the implementation of Goldwater-Nichols regarding Joint education and Joint officer development. The report highlighted two key points. First, DOD must develop a strategic plan for joint officer development. Second, DOD must overcome the challenge of “educating its officers in Joint matters and then filling key positions with officers who have the requisite joint education and experience.” (GAO Report. (March 2003), *A Strategic Approach is needed to Improve Joint Staff Officer Development*, p.2)

The GAO report provided ammunition to Congress to require a series of revisions of joint professional military education. This requirement is demonstrated in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (Draft). This report was provided to the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives. In Joint Officer Management, the bill tasks the “Secretary of Defense to develop a strategic plan linking the future requirements for military personnel trained and educated in joint matters to the resources required to develop those persons, in terms of manpower, formal education, practical

experience and other requirements.” Additionally, this plan requires the Secretary to identify the methods in which he will fulfill the requirements. (NDAA for FY2005, H.R. 4200, May 2004)

One of the key aspects of National Defense Authorization Act (2005) is to require officers eligible for promotion to Brigadier General or Rear Admiral (Lower Half) to be joint specialty qualified prior to selection to the flag rank. Currently, the services have been able to promote qualified officers to flag rank with joint specialty waivers.

Congress no longer believes the waivers are conducive to developing the joint professionalism of the officer corps. As late as December, 2002, the General Accounting Office reported that in fiscal year 2001, 58 out of 124 officers who were promoted to general and flag rank did not meet the joint specialty requirements.(GAO Report.(Dec 2002) *Joint Officer Development has Improved, but a Strategic Approach is Needed*)

Upon further analysis, congressional concern over the development of a professional joint officer corps is not unwarranted. More importantly, what education, experience, or training methodology is used to develop a strategic joint commander? Currently, no such standardized path exists.

Today, each service selects officers for advancement to general officer or flag officer based on demonstrated ability, competence, and potential specific to their Service. The officer has mastered fighting his Services’ specific land, naval, or air forces. He is not; however, selected to general or flag rank based on demonstrated ability, competence, and potential to the Joint community. He has not demonstrated mastery or ability to integrate the assets of all services in a joint campaign. Instead, after selection to general or flag officer rank and assigned to a joint command, the officer will learn “on the job.”

Often, this occurs after being placed in a high level strategic or operational joint command.

The joint strategic or operational commander can no longer be developed independently by each Service. His development must be a comprehensive and intentional blending of joint and service competencies and traits, warfighting experience, self-development, and institutional training and education.

The purpose of this monograph is to determine the requirements to develop strategic joint force commanders and leaders for the 21st Century. The methodology employed to determine how to develop strategic joint leaders will first look at the joint warfighting environment in the 21st Century, recommend the competencies and traits required of strategic joint commanders, evaluate the requirements to train and develop strategic joint leaders and finally recommend changes to our current developmental and professional joint education system.

II. What is Strategic Joint Leadership and who is a Strategic Joint Commander?

People remain the centerpiece of successful joint operations. Although the capabilities with the tools of warfare will change, the dynamics of human interactions and will, instilled through innovative leadership, will remain the driving force in all military operations. (Joint Operations Concepts (2003). p.5)

In order to understand the requirement to develop a strategic joint commander, it is important first to define the terms: strategic joint leadership and strategic joint commander. Additionally, the environment that the strategic joint commander operates must be explored. Finally, it is relevant to determine the characteristics strategic joint commander should demonstrate to succeed at the highest joint command levels.

A review of service doctrine, in order to determine an appropriate definition of strategic leadership and command, turned up a surprising lack of written material on the subject. The most extensive discussion of strategic leadership can be found in the United States Army Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership*. Leadership is defined as “influencing people – by providing purpose, direction, and motivation – while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization.” (FM6-22, p.1-4) FM 6-22 further delineates levels of leadership. Direct leadership is defined as face to face leadership in which leaders influence and direct small groups and individuals to mission accomplishment. Organizational leaders focus on influencing individuals and the organization primarily through subordinate leaders and commanders. Organizational leaders primarily exercise leadership indirectly but also use direct leadership on a lesser scale. The organizational leader often deals with a greater amount of complexity, more people, and uncertainty. (p.1-11)

FM 6-22 explains strategic leadership primarily through the actions of the strategic leader. “Strategic leaders are the Army’s highest-level thinkers, warfighters, and political-military experts...They simultaneously sustain the Army’s culture, envision the future, convey that vision to a wide audience, and personally lead change.”(FM6-22, p.7-1) Army strategic leaders at the highest levels of the institutional Army, can act as Combatant Commanders, and interact and understand the complexities of the national security environment. Strategic leaders embody values based leadership and execute that leadership based on Army values. (FM6-22, p.7-2) Leadership at the strategic level is complex, large in scope, interdependent, and accomplished in an environment of extreme uncertainty.

As described above, it is readily apparent that the Army’s strategic leadership doctrine is first and foremost focused on developing leaders to further the Army institution. It is critical for these leaders to maintain and shape the vision and values for the future of the service. Army strategic leaders must maintain an in-depth knowledge of political, economic, information, and military elements of national power. (p.7-1) Army strategic leaders are first focused on the institutional Army, Title X responsibilities -- the building, maintaining, equipping, and training of the force. Although mentioned, little attention is focused on the duties, requirements and skills required to be a combatant commander in the joint arena.

Additionally, Army leadership doctrine tends to focus the types of leadership based on the level of organization and the quantity of people in the organization. For example, direct leadership is practiced at the team, squad, platoon, company, and battalion level. Organizational leadership is practiced from the battalion to the corps

level in the Army. An organizational leader's span of control may range from a thousand to tens of thousands. Strategic leaders typically influence from several thousand to hundreds of thousands. Our doctrinal manuals tend to characterize the leadership level that a leader operates by equating it to the quantity of those led or by the rank of the leader. While this is useful, it may not be the best method to describe when strategic leadership occurs. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

While the Army appears to have the most developed leadership doctrine, the Marine Corps also maintains leadership doctrine. MCWP 6-11, *Leading Marines*, is focused on describing the values, ethos, foundation, and challenges which are unique to the Marine Corps. Unlike *Army Leadership*, *Leading Marines* is intended to apply to the most junior Marine Lance Corporal to the Commandant. The manual is steeped in the history and traditions of the Marine Corps. It makes no attempt to describe different leadership techniques or requirements that result from great responsibilities, complexities, and span of control of leaders. *Leading Marines* states exactly the purpose of the manual: "It is about the inseparable relationship between the leader *and* the led, and is as much about the individual Marine—the bedrock upon which our Corps is built—as it is about any leader." (MCWP6-11, *Leading Marines* (2002), p. Intro)

Although the Navy does not publish a specified leadership manual, it does provide naval commanders with *Command at Sea*. First published in 1943, this book is specifically targeted at a ship, submarine, or aviation commander. It fully discusses the challenges, procedures, and uniqueness of command at sea. Although never stated, *Command at Sea* focuses on leadership at the direct and organizational level on a ship. It can be assumed that this book also applies to naval leaders when they assume greater

responsibility as strike group or task force naval commanders. *Command at Sea* is the first Service specific leadership publication that addresses naval operations in the context of joint operations. Unfortunately, this brief interlude into the joint world is only a paragraph about the joint chain of command and joint terminology.

Both Joint publications and Air Force publications are curiously absent any leadership doctrine. Joint doctrinal manuals discuss command and control and numerous other topics; however, nothing specifically addresses leadership at the strategic or operational level. This absence of literature is actually something to be expected. In keeping with Service Title X requirements, trained, equipped, and ready forces are provided to the joint commander. It is also assumed the strategic or operational joint commander is experienced, trained, and capable to successfully lead the force. Somewhere in the joint commander's Service specific development, he must have developed the requisite skills to meet the challenge of joint strategic command.

In summary, joint and service leadership doctrine does little to define joint strategic leadership or a joint strategic commander. Joint Publication 3.0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, describes the levels of war as strategic, operational, and tactical. The tactical level of war is focused on direct combat with the enemy in battles or engagements to accomplish limited objectives. The operational level of war links tactical employment and engagement of units with the strategic objectives determined by national objectives. The operational level of war is characterized by operational art in which the joint force commander links employment of forces in time, space, and purpose to achieve the strategic objectives. The operational art is represented by the joint strategic commander's campaign plan. A campaign may take several months to years to

accomplish the strategic objectives. National strategic objectives are determined at the strategic level of war. National strategy and the allocation of national resources are also determined at this level. These resources are typically described as elements of national power embodied in diplomatic, informational, economic, and military power. “Strategy is the art and science of developing and employing armed forces and other instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to secure national or multinational objectives.” (Joint Pub 3-0 (2001). pgs II-2 to II-3) In today’s operational environment, strategic and operational commanders and leaders typically work closely with the interagency.

The delineation of the levels of war is useful to determine a definition for joint strategic command and leadership. Adapting the Army’s definition of leadership, a more appropriate definition may be derived for joint strategic leadership. Strategic joint leadership is the process of influencing people – by providing purpose, direction, and motivation – while operating to accomplish the mission and to improve the joint organization. Additionally, in coordination with civilian authorities and the interagency, joint strategic leaders provide advice to the President on use of diplomatic, informational, economic, and military power to accomplish strategic objectives. Joint strategic and operational commanders, designated by regulation or statute, advise and coordinate the use of national power and employ joint forces to achieve strategic and operational objectives.

III. Strategic Environment

While defining the context of strategic leadership is important, it is also necessary to determine the environment in which the strategic leader will be asked to lead in the 21st century. Since the end of the Cold War, containment of communism, and bi-polar world super-powers, the world stage has become increasingly complex and uncertain. Some would even say it has become chaotic. The certainty and stability of the Cold War has been replaced with trans-national actors, failed nation states, global terrorism, natural resource competition, rogue states, and weapons of mass destruction proliferation. Our victory in the Cold War appears to have let the genie out of the bottle as nations and states vie for crumbling pieces of the Soviet Empire or recognition and justice for long perceived exploitation by the western world. With the United States assuming the role of the world's only super-power, we have found ourselves challenged and in many cases ill-prepared to handle this changing dynamic in national security. The military has long recognized this change in the security environment and much of that recognition has spurred our current Defense transformation. As the military is prodded from traditional warfighting to counter irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive threats, strategic leadership is faced with a wide ranging continuum in which they are expected to develop and resource military forces, and to fight and win.

General Tony Zinni in *Battle Ready* says it best, "The military traditionally goes out there and kills people and breaks things. From that, we determine how to straighten out the mess or resolve the conflict."(Zinni, Tony (2004). Pgs 436-437). Strategic leaders and commanders find themselves in a constantly changing international, global environment in which they must understand the impact of global and regional threats, not

only military but political and informational. Strategic commanders influence globally while commanding forces regionally.

As the world passes from the industrial age into the information age, there is another change which affects the environment of strategic commanders and leaders. The information age is characterized by a change in “how wealth is created, an altering in the distribution of power, increasing complexity, shrinking distances around the world, and compression of time, increasing the tempo of our lives.” (Alberts, Gartska, and Stein. (2003), p.15)

The dominant characteristic of the information age can be described as speed and access: speed with which information is passed and access to greater quantities of information. The speed and quantity of information available for decision-makers has increased exponentially in the information age. (p.16) This characteristic has dramatically changed the environment in which we all operate. Creation of wealth and power is tied directly to information. The ability to collect, process, analyze, and dominate information mediums can directly equate to the creation of wealth and power. Information is not only a medium to be worked in; it can also be used as a weapon. In many cases, the information weapon can have as much of an effect or even greater, than kinetic ones. The wide ranging quantity of information and the speed with which it is distributed to the public directly impacts strategic leaders and commanders. (p.19) While public access may not directly influence the decision, public response can immediately impact the execution of the decision.

The information age has also created a dramatic increase in the complexity, compression of time and distance, as well as increased interdependence. The speed in

which information moves has rapidly reduced the decision maker's ability to make timely decisions. Time required for assimilation, analysis, and decision may render a leader's decision irrelevant. The compression of time has increased the tempo of a strategic leader's decision cycle. Ability to dominate information and rapid decision making provides the strategic leader with a decisive advantage.

The military implications of the information age have had significant repercussions to the Services. The Defense establishment presses forward with transformation of the Services in the name of network centric warfare. Network centric warfare is the current working theory of information age warfare. While network centric warfare may be debated as a new theory of war, it cannot be denied that the network centrality has formed the basis of transformation for the force.

Many of the information age characteristics previously described closely parallel the military implications. Compression of decision making time significantly impacts the warfighting commander. In many cases, this compression is not only in time, there is a compression in the levels of war. Additionally, the tyranny of terrain and distance is often reduced by enhanced communication capability. The compression of the levels of war demonstrates the immediate impact tactical actions may have on strategic decisions. In many cases, the strategic commander finds that the requirement to decide and act is influenced by an ever-tightening decision loop.

Communications means and media -- raw, uncensored footage and continuous feed can significantly constrain the flexibility and agility a strategic commander may have to make decisions. The global media not only influences the warfighter on the ground, it also impacts national level strategic decision makers. This characteristic was

best illustrated by military actions in Mogadishu, Somalia. Live footage of the “Black Hawk Down” and American bodies stripped and drug through the streets of Mogadishu by a frenzied mob effectively ended United States involvement in Somalia and caused the immediate withdrawal of all forces. A savvy, media astute strategic commander is essential in the information age not only to manage media impact, but he must also direct it to suit his strategic objectives.

Finally, the plethora of sensors and information collectors on the battlefield in network centric warfare also aid to reduce the friction and fog of combat operations. While not eliminated from the battlefield, network centric apostles declare fog and friction will be reduced. This reduction will allow a commander to make quicker, more accurate decisions.

The information age and network centric warfare will significantly alter the environment in which the strategic commander and leader functions. Rapid advances in information technologies and the ability of society and the military to adapt to these changes constantly alter the environment of the strategic commander. Understanding the benefits and implications of these changes are crucial for the strategic commander. However, one must also ask, “What in the battlefield environment has not changed?” Regardless of the technological advances, the strategic, operational and tactical commander still asks himself three basic questions:

1. How do I see enemy?
2. How do I see terrain?
3. How do I see myself?

The commander can use these three questions in any given situation, whether plan development or execution to assess his relationship to the enemy, terrain, and his ability to meet the challenges each present. Within the context of these three questions, the commander deals with two dynamics that have been present on fields of battle since the beginning of time.

In his classic study, *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz introduced two characteristics of war. Friction can be found whenever military forces are operating. Clausewitz described friction in the following manner, “Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war.” (eds. Howard and Paret,(1984) *On War*,p.119) Friction occurs during military operations that are typically not just one effect but by the accumulative effect of multiple set backs, difficulties, and problems. For example, in Operation Torch, the campaign in North Africa, Allies relied on one major line of communication which followed a rail line from Casablanca to Tunis. The allies conducted most major movements and re-supply of allied forces along this line of communication. As soon as the beach head was secure in Algeria, British forces disembarked from the beaches of Oran and rapidly pushed east to try and cut the Africa Corps off from its major re-supply point at the port of Tunis. Enemy contact, poor condition of the roads and rails due to heavy coastal rains, poor communications, inexperienced staff, and inability to provide fuel to forward elements produced a cumulative effect that led to the culmination of the Allied drive outside Tunis. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was forced to halt the advance to Tunis and consolidate his forces.

This culmination eventually led to the United States' tactical defeat at Kasserine pass by Rommel's Africa Corps.

Military forces conduct numerous activities to reduce the effect of friction on the battlefield. Simple orders, rehearsals, backbriefs, reconnaissance, and tough, realistic training are all used to assist in reducing the debilitating effects of friction; but nothing completely eliminates friction.

Fog in battle primarily impacts the commander or those leaders making decisions on the battlefield. Once again, this factor affects the tactical to strategic commander on the battlefield. The effects of fog in battle are immediate for the tactical commander but may manifest themselves over an extended period of time for the strategic and operational commander. Fog is essentially uncertainty, fear, and danger on the battlefield. This fog can impact a commander in numerous ways. It may paralyze the commander from making a timely decision as he wades through numerous inaccurate, conflicting, incomplete, and correct reports. He must also consider the lack of reports in this same time frame. The commander may be unable to function as he sifts through a myriad of conflicting reports thus dooming his army to inaction.

The impact of fear and uncertainty may cause the commander to lose will or decisiveness that his course of action is correct. He may lose heart at a critical moment in the fight and change his course of action or lose his will to defeat the enemy believing his forces have been placed in extreme disadvantage. The commander considers all of this in the fog of the battlefield. The commander may also decide to ignore indicators on the battlefield due to his nature to ignore the natural uncertainty in battle.

Fog and friction are not elements of the battlefield that will disappear regardless of improvements in technology. For fog and friction to disappear, the greatest source must be removed from the battlefield – the human dimension. Fog and friction are factors that must be embraced by the commander so he can train and prepare himself to deal with these intangibles. The military spends an immense amount of time trying to reduce the impact of fog and friction in battle, but it is never something that can be eliminated. It is merely a fact of combat, just as predictable as lost luggage in an airport or taxes. You can never be rid of them; you can only try to reduce the effects it has on you.

The rub which arises in the information age is some of the assumptions which theorists have made with network centric warfare. One of the preeminent assumptions in network centric warfare is information superiority. Information superiority will allow the force to achieve “dominant battlespace knowledge.” Dominant battlespace knowledge will allow the commander to maintain “comprehensive awareness of all the decision-relevant elements within a defined battlespace, and the ability to predict, with a very high degree of confidence, near term enemy actions and combat outcomes.” (Owens, William A. (1996) Introduction) The United States Army has even gone so far as to imply that commanders will have nearly ninety percent of all information on enemy composition and disposition in which to make decisions.

While this may be a goal of network centric warfare, there is little to indicate that this capability will become a reality. Regardless of our overmatching technical intelligence gathering capability, the proclivity to inundate the commander with volumes of information, and the ability to communicate with commanders in combat anywhere, or

instantaneous intelligence feed from unmanned aerial vehicles or satellite, nothing we currently have can interpret or predict how the enemy will think and act. Operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq continue to reinforce the constant of fog and friction on the battlefield. Try as it may, net centricity can only reduce the fog of combat, not eliminate it. As Martin Van Creveld writes, “From Plato to NATO, the history of command in war consists of an endless quest for certainty... (Van Creveld (1985), p.264)

Thus, the strategic environment for the commander is set. The information age revolutionized how we think of and conduct war. It has led to network centric warfare as our current theory of future war. The impact of the information age is significant for the strategic and operational commander but some constants remain firm in warfighting and are as ageless as war itself.

To summarize, the critical factors that will affect the commander in the information age are significant. Information dominance is the source of power in the information age. The commander’s ability to dominate information, in his battlespace, relative to his enemy, will significantly enable his ability to make timely and accurate decisions. The velocity and quantity of information the commander will receive will increase the speed of his decision loop. However, quantity and speed of information can work as a double edged sword for the commander. The commander can use it to enhance his decision making or he may become so inundated with information, he becomes paralyzed in the “fog” of war. The media will be an even more pervasive element on the battlefield. Media focus and opinion will have strategic implications and can even impact on national strategic decisions and commitment. Strategic and operational commanders in the 21st century must master the media and, if possible, make it their tool, and if not,

make it neutral. Finally, fog and friction are constants in combat that every commander must learn to anticipate, and even embrace in combat in order to understand and accept the complications they create for decision making and combat operations. Ultimately, the ability of the commander to embrace these factors in his environment will lead to success.

IV. Joint Strategic Leader and Commander Competencies

Such are the burdens in battle that the commander's courage and strength of will must overcome if he hopes to achieve outstanding success. The burdens increase with the number of men in his command, and therefore the higher his position, the greater the strength of character he needs to bear the mounting load. (Clausewitz, p.105)

In order to determine joint strategic leader and commander competencies, it is first important to determine what the difference is between a leader and a commander. In most circles, the term leader and commander are used interchangeably. However, although fine, there is a distinction between the two. For the purpose of this monograph, a strategic leader is any one who leads troopers in a joint environment that has impact or influence at the strategic level. He has the ability and responsibility to assist and influence strategic commanders. However, what he does not have is the authority of a commander. The easiest example of a strategic leader without strategic command is a COCOM's principal staff. For example, the Chief of Staff, J3, or J5 all exercise significant influence at the strategic level, but do not exercise strategic command. Another example is the Service's senior leader such as the Chief of Staff of the Army or the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

The joint strategic commander is authorized and empowered by law and regulation to command troopers in a joint command. He is inherently a leader, good or bad, by virtue of being responsible, influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish a mission. But, as the commander, he and he alone, is held responsible for the accomplishment or failure of the mission, all that his command

accomplishes and all that his command fails to do. The joint strategic commander accomplishes strategic objectives. He is on a world stage and held accountable by the President and history. The joint strategic commander, just as a ship, company, or squadron commander, bears the burden of command – alone. He is responsible for his decisions, the strategy, and the ultimate success or failure of his forces.

There has been a plethora of writings on strategic leadership in both the business and military communities. It is important to note that the studies in general focus on the ability to lead large organizations focused on the ambiguous, uncertain, and unpredictable environment of the information age. The strategic leader competencies center on leading organizations and providing the purpose, direction, and focus to these organizations. Current business writings emphasize several desired competencies required to be a successful strategic business leader. The strategic business leader must be mentally agile, able to learn from previous failure, and be a life long educator of his subordinates. The strategic business leader is able to develop nimble organizations. He is able to provide intent and discipline to the organization. And finally, he is a committed learner and self-developer. (Cummings, Thomas and Sprietzer, Gretchen. (2001) (pp. 242-253). and Connor, Daryl R. (1998). (pp 259-291))

Military writers and study groups have expounded upon much of the business leadership philosophy and applied it to the military profession. In this scenario two major studies stand out. The first study was conducted at the Army War College, headed by Dr. Leonard Wong, *Strategic Leadership Competencies* published in 2003. This major study was directed by the Army Chief of Staff to prepare strategic leaders in the

Army for the 21st century. This study is sufficiently broad enough in scope to apply well beyond Army strategic leaders.

The second major writing on strategic leadership competencies was produced by Joint Forces Command, Joint Experimentation Directorate. The JFCOM J9 study was focused specifically to develop the “right people with the right competencies at the right place at precisely the time required to achieve the desired effect.” (JFCOM J9 Brief, 22 June 2004, slide 8). Joint senior leader competencies were focused at O6 rank and higher. This study was specifically focused on how to develop joint leaders and tried to remain devoid of specific service competencies. As demonstrated in Dr. Wong’s study, this was probably easier than expected. The JFCOM J9 study relies heavily on Dr Wong’s study group’s analysis. All of the metacompetencies derived in the Army study are included as one of the seven joint senior leader competencies or as a sub-competency.

The term “metacompetency” is used by Wong to reduce the comprehensive list of specific leader competencies. As Wong writes, “...at the individual level, it is difficult to assess one’s leadership ability when the lists suggest that the leader must be, know, and do just about every thing.” Thus, Wong reduced these lists to “metacompetencies” to provide a useful framework in discussing strategic leadership competencies.

The Army’s Strategic Leadership study group ascertained six major metacompetencies. This is a fairly significant change to previous leadership studies or doctrine such as the *Army Strategic Leadership Primer* or FM 6-22 *Army Leadership* in which a checklist approach of those things you must be, know, and do to be a successful strategic leader.

The six metacompetencies listed in the 2003 study were: identity, mental agility, cross-cultural savvy, interpersonal maturity, world-class warrior, and professional astuteness. The group chose to focus on these all encompassing competencies to provide a broad outline for the capabilities that must be developed in strategic leaders. The purpose of this approach was to assist in directing leader development strategies and to provide the individual with a tool for self assessment of strategic leader capability. (Wong, Leonard and others, (Sept 2003) pg.5)

The *identity* metacompetency deals with self-awareness, the ability to gather self-feedback, the formation of accurate self-perceptions, and the ability to change one's self-concept as required. This metacompetency is values based not only of the individual, but also the individual's understanding and embodiment of their service or institutional values. While the identity metacompetency initially develops with individual self-awareness, within the strategic leader, this competency develops to focus on the future development of leaders in the institution. As the *identity* metacompetency develops in the strategic leader, his focus shifts from personal development to successful development in his subordinates. (pp.5-6)

Mental Agility focuses on the critical metacompetency of adaptability. As addressed in numerous leadership writings, information age characteristics, and network centric warfare, this is a critical competency for any leader in the constantly changing environment of the information age. Mentally agile leaders are able to "recognize changes in the environment; to determine what is new, what must be learned to be effective, and includes the learning process that follows determination, all performed to standard and with feedback." (p.6) As stated earlier, strategic leaders operate in an

environment of complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity. They must be able to scan the environment and setting with a comprehensive view. They identify root causes to an issue; they are able to sense priority, importance, and relevance of contributing factors. Finally, they assimilate and integrate information, assess patterns and trends and cause and effect relationships. They can translate these observations into a clear vision and meaningful explanations for subordinates to understand and take action. This concept is reinforced in current business leadership writings through the concept of nimbleness. Finally, mentally agile leaders are comfortable making decisions with only part of the information available.

General Colin Powell provides a good example of how a strategic leader must make decisions in uncertainty. Colin Powell enhanced his tolerance for decision making with uncertainty by combining experience, intuition, and fact. General Powell was discussing his time as the National Security Advisor but he used this methodology throughout his career. Essentially, General Powell made decisions based on having forty to seventy percent of the available information. Because decisions could not be postponed indefinitely, he made the decision by assessing the information available and going with “gut feeling.” If he had less than forty percent of the information, he delayed the decision. (Powell, Colin L. (1995). p.393)

Cross-cultural savvy is a strategic leader metacompetency which addresses the need of the strategic leader to influence, interact, and direct numerous organizations and associated organizational culture to include joint, interagency, coalition, and international entities. (Wong, p. 7) He must be able to understand beyond his own cultural bias to effectively interact and influence organizations with cultures different than his own. This

has long been a desired trait of strategic leaders; however, this is of significant importance in the information age. As discussed previously in the strategic environment, globalization, interdependency, and global commitments of the United States dictate an ever increasing requirement for strategic leaders to effectively work with and influence non DOD military organizations and international leaders. A key caveat of cross-cultural savvy is for the strategic leader not to abandon his service or national culture. He must remain grounded in both his national and service values.

Interpersonal maturity deals with the strategic leader's interaction and relation with subordinates, peers and other political and military leaders throughout the world. This metacompetency deals with the heart of the joint strategic leader and his ability to interact with leaders in outside organizations, interagency, services, or international leaders. While many of the characteristics of interpersonal maturity of the strategic leader is similar to his actions as a junior leader, the breadth and depth of strategic leadership is expansive in comparison to the direct or organizational leadership interpersonal skills he may have used as a junior leader. (p. 8)

As Wong points out, strategic leadership is as much about collaboration as it is about authority. The strategic leader builds consensus and relies significantly less on dictate. His goal is to empower and inspire subordinates to achieve his strategic vision. The strategic leader will often focus the majority of his time traveling and coordinating outside of his own organization as much as he is present. For the organization to succeed, subordinates must be empowered to take initiative and execute solutions. (p.8)

Consensus building and negotiation now move to the top of the strategic leader's interpersonal maturity skills. The memoirs of former Central Command leaders,

Generals Schwarzkopf, Zinni, and Franks, are replete with examples of their interaction with leaders of the Gulf States and Central Asia. Two vignettes from General Tommy Franks illustrate this point. The skill of negotiation is exemplified during General Franks's dealings with Mohammed Fahim Khan, leader of Afghanistan's Northern Alliance. General Franks negotiated the terms of the Northern Alliance's coalition with the United States and the operational constraints and objectives to be placed on the Northern Alliance. (Franks, Tommy, (2004) p 309-311)

Consensus building and personal interaction are articulated throughout General Franks's book as he navigates the waters of international coalition building, overflight and basing rights, and international support for Operation Enduring Freedom. In many instances, General Franks's personal relationship with President Musharraf, Crown Prince Abdullah, and King Hussein proved essential to garner support for United States action.

The final aspect of interpersonal maturity is the strategic leader's responsibility to develop the next generation of strategic leaders. The strategic leader must establish an environment which nurtures professional development and self improvement. The strategic leader is a coach and mentor. In this fashion, the strategic leader ensures the health and future of the profession.

The importance of mentors is further emphasized in Edgar Puryear's, *American Generalship*, in which he discusses the relationship and criticality of mentors to hundreds of America's generals and admirals. Dwight Eisenhower's relationship with Fox Connor and General George C. Marshall was instrumental in his development and preparation for strategic leadership. Likewise, General Marshall could have attributed his development

to General Franklin Bell, Major General Hunter Liggett, and General John Pershing. George Patton learned from General Pershing and Secretary of War Henry Stimson. Finally, General Douglas MacArthur's mentor was his father. Each one of these mentors played a critical role in the development and education of their protégées. The mentors counseled, taught, advised, and opened doors for their understudies. (Puryear, p.188-236)

World-class warfighter is a competency every leader with strategic capability hopes to achieve. As Samuel Huntington observed, it is the defining factor of the military professional. The abilities of the world-class warfighter are developed over the course of a career. The world-class warfighter understands the intricacies of theater strategy, campaigning, service and interagency capability, and multinational operations. The world-class warfighter operates with equal ease throughout full-spectrum operations. The foundation of the world-class warfighter is tactical and technical competence, a lifelong study of history, military art, professional journals and education. (Wong, p.9)

Finally, *professional astuteness* is the last competency which describes a strategic leader. "Strategic leaders who are professionally astute understand they are no longer merely members of a profession, but leaders in the profession as the Army serves the nation. They see the need to develop the future leaders of the profession, work with stakeholders, and communicate this responsibility to future leaders of the profession." (p.10) A professionally astute strategic leaders first ambition is no longer to themselves but to the success of their institution.

The Strategic Studies Institute study of strategic leadership competencies headed by Dr. Wong is a comprehensive review and evaluation of contemporary business and

military leadership writings. It is Army centric, but broad enough to apply to any military strategic leader.

Joint Forces Command's working paper addresses joint strategic leader competencies from a joint perspective. The paper is heavily influenced by the Strategic Studies Institute research. The metacompetencies proposed by Dr. Wong are found throughout the Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) developmental framework. The JFCOM framework consists of seven competencies and 25 sub-competencies. The JFCOM Joint Competencies Leader Development Framework consists of the following competencies: World Class Warfighter, Technical, Improving, Influencing, Personal Leadership, Interpersonal Maturity, and Conceptual.

Since JFCOM's Joint Senior Leader Competencies draws heavily from Dr. Wong's studies, it is only necessary to discuss those competencies that do not readily align with Dr. Wong's metacompetencies. All of the metacompetencies identified by Dr. Wong are one of the seven competencies or sub-competencies in JFCOM's framework. World Class Warfighter and Interpersonal Maturity are essentially the same with one difference. In JFCOM's competency, *Interpersonal Maturity*, they include cross-cultural savvy as a sub-competency. JFCOM describes interpersonal maturity as the ability to effectively communicate with broad audiences and external organizations. The senior leader is able to communicate effectively, actively listen, and motivate the team to achieve organizational objectives. The senior leader also understands organizational and bureaucratic culture which allows him to operate and communicate across boundaries effectively. (JFCOM, p.5)

Technical competency is the specific ability of the senior leader to have a broad understanding of systems, interrelationships, interdependencies, and the relationships between them. Additionally, the senior leader is able to leverage information age technologies to assist in visualizing and moving the organization forward to achieve organizational goals. (p.6)

The competency *Influencing* describes the joint leader's ability to communicate his vision and intent. He builds trust and empowers subordinates to accomplish organizational goals, he encourages risk taking, and is able to build consensus to improve organizational effectiveness. (p.6) Influencing is described throughout the metacompetencies of identity and professional astuteness.

Conceptual competency is achieved when a senior leader is adaptive, innovative and able to deal with ambiguity, uncertainty, and complexity. The senior leader is able to solve problems in this environment and demonstrates cognitive capacity, creative and critical thinking, to achieve goals and the desired end state. He is able to anticipate issues and act proactively as well as reactively to meet opportunities. (p.5) The metacompetency mental agility fully incorporates the elements of JFCOM's conceptual competency.

Improving joint leaders continuously develop self, others, and organizations to increase capability and accomplish current and future missions. Improving leaders embrace lifelong learning, team building, and change. They are able to develop and implement an organizational vision which develops and fosters creativity, teamwork, pride, and confidence. The improving leader is innovative and action oriented. (p.7)

The final senior leader competency is *personal leadership*. Personal leadership is demonstrated by the senior leader who embodies the Joint Warrior Ethos – its set of values and beliefs. His self-identity is defined by the values of the profession. He is self-confident which was developed by self-assessment and life long professional development. He also sees his responsibility to develop future senior leaders in the profession. (p.4) Personal leadership is addressed in the metacompetencies of identity and professional astuteness.

The competencies required for the strategic leader are holistic and all encompassing. There is sufficient evidence that they are necessary for a strategic leader to be successful in the 21st Century. Both the Army and Joint Forces Command have clearly outlined the competencies required for a joint strategic leader. The necessity of the strategic leader to understand, adapt, and master the intricacies of network centric warfare, rapid decision making loops, and the influence of global media are necessary requirements in today's information environment. Just as important, the strategic leader must also understand and master the timeless conditions of fog and friction in battle.

While it is important for the strategic leader to master the competencies to be successful in his profession during peacetime, is it enough for him to be successful in wartime. Will it be enough for him to become a successful strategic commander? Once again, I submit there is a fine difference between a strategic leader and a strategic commander. As stated previously, the strategic leader functions at the highest level; but, in essence, he will never bear the burden which is placed upon the strategic level commander. A successful strategic leader does not always equal a successful strategic commander. Ultimately, it is the strategic commander who bears the burden of success

and failure in battle. In the end, the strategic commander is judged by the results he produces. If he is successful, then he remains in command, if he is not, his relief may occur at the next failed challenge.

As Huntington mentioned, the ultimate demonstration of professional competency is the individual who can successfully direct the combined operations of large scale air, naval and ground forces. Yet, many leaders can be trained in the “how to” of integrating joint operations. As is often quoted in the Army, “it takes 18 years to build a battalion commander and 22 years to build a brigade commander.” The same can be said about a strategic leader. The successful strategic leader takes a service approximately 30-35 years to build. In that process, he is probably extremely competent in his service core competencies, but probably not so in the necessary joint competencies. If he is successful in the strategic competencies, will he necessarily be a successful strategic joint warfighting commander?

Throughout the history of war, there is much evidence that the skills one requires to be successful as a leader may not necessarily make him an accomplished warfighting commander. He must not only have the competencies we discussed, but he must also exhibit some intangible qualities.

Once again, some of the best insight of the intangible skills a commander requires to be successful in battle are found in the past. One of the critical factors Clausewitz described in *On War* is the role of military genius. Clausewitz described this as the harmonious combination of elements of the mind and temperament. He described the commander as having exceptional “powers of the intellect” which enable him to see through the fog and uncertainty of battle and was able to use a skilled intelligence to

recognize and find the truth. As the French have named it and Clausewitz described the trait of coup d'oeil or an inner light in which to determine what action to take when all around the commander is chaotic. Within the power of intellect, Clausewitz also recognized the commander must not only have determination to act, but the will and discipline to act with reflection.

The commander maintains a presence of mind to deal with the unexpected and strength of will to overcome all obstacles in order to win. Not only does he demonstrate physical courage, but he demonstrates a moral courage to take responsibility for his actions. For the commander, courage and strength of will are what allows the commander to impose his will on the enemy through the actions of his men instilled by his leadership. Clausewitz writes, "Such are the burdens in battle that the commander's courage and strength of will must overcome if he hopes to achieve outstanding success. The burdens increase with the number of men in his command and therefore the higher his position, the greater the strength of character he needs to bear the mounting load." (Clausewitz, 105) Finally, the successful military commander demonstrates imagination and creativity in applying the operational art to succeed in a campaign.

The traits of will, imagination, power of intellect and strength of character are reinforced in the writings of Baron Von Freytag-Loringhoven. In his study of successful commanders in the 18th and 19th century, *The Power of Personality in War*, Von Freytag-Loringhoven indicated successful commanders displayed the traits of imagination, ambition, a strong mind to resist the impressions of war, and strength of character. The impressions of war are the fear, danger, uncertainty, and exertions every commander shoulders. (von Freytag-Loringhoven, (1991) p.311)

The trait of imagination in today's military lexicon is the ability for the commander to visualize the engagement; and, for the strategic commander, the entire campaign. This trait defines the ability of a commander to visualize terrain and understand its effects on his force and his weapons. For the strategic and operational commander, it is the ability of the commander to visualize the campaign in time, space, and purpose. For the strategic commander, he must be able to visualize the employment of ground, air, and naval forces, integrated and synchronized, in order to achieve the objectives of his campaign.

Information age technology has done much to enable the strategic commander to visualize the fight; however, that primarily deals with execution of the fight. The strategic commander must be "operationally minded." He must visualize his campaign and anticipate the cause and effect of his actions. During execution of a battle or engagement, the commander will use his "imagination" to decipher the fog in which he must make decisions. The strategic commander's development of the power of visualization is essential to his success as a warfighting commander. This is accomplished through years on staff and in command. Von Freytag-Loringhoven wrote, "The ability to form accurate mental pictures of a situation quickly is especially important today when the higher commander cannot hope to see his troops with his physical eyes." (p. 296)

Von Freytag-Loringhoven wrote those words nearly one hundred years ago, but they apply with equal relevance today. As described earlier, the information age and network centric warfare attempts to provide the commander with near perfect information in near real time. However, this information, unfiltered, and unanalyzed, place the

commander in the same position Napoleon or Patton found themselves during an engagement. While they made decisions with incomplete, inaccurate, or missing information, the strategic commander today must wade through excessive information in order to make the decision. The strategic commander's ability to properly picture the military situation, act with determination and skill, executed with violence, will seldom end in failure.

Ambition is another trait forwarded in the *Power of Personality in War*.

Ambition in this context is a combination of individual pride, organizational pride, and national pride. Individual pride is that trait which pushes an individual to strive to excel. This is not to be confused with ego. That level of self-pride leads to actions which merely focus on the self-aggrandizement or pursuit of fame which can ultimately lead to the destruction of a warfighting force. Ultimately, individual pride is that which drives an individual to better himself and those around him in order to become a master of his profession.

Organizational pride is that pride which the individual holds for the success and capabilities of his organization. As Dr. Wong wrote, this is demonstrated in the metacompetency – professional astuteness. The strategic leader recognizes that his ultimate professional success is measured in the success of his subordinates and his organization. Great leaders have always stimulated his subordinates through high expectations and achievement which directly results in the improvement of the organization.

National pride is also a characteristic of a strategic leader who exhibits professional astuteness. National pride is the pride which allows a great leader to provide

service to the Nation without expectation of great reward and often through great deprivation to self and family. George Washington, Ulysses Grant, Chester Nimitz, and George C. Marshall exemplify this trait. As Von Freytag-Loringhoven wrote, “The secret of the success of such men is that they were not only great soldiers, but also, in the fullest sense of the word, great citizens.” (p.301)

A final aspect of pride is the ability of strategic commanders to put aside pride and ego to accomplish common objectives held by a coalition. The ability to put aside differences allows strategic commanders from different countries and organizations allow the coalition to achieve a unity of effort which is unattainable otherwise. The European Theater of Operations in WWII is replete with examples of both how good and bad pride played among commanders. Dwight D. Eisenhower was a master of maintaining the Allied coalition despite significant problems with Bernard Montgomery and George Patton. Eisenhower consistently demonstrated the highest levels of professional astuteness and cross-cultural savvy despite Montgomery’s insufferable ego and undermining of Eisenhower’s authority. Eisenhower, on the other hand, gave guidance to United States officers that they were to go to all lengths to ensure Americans and British would “get along.”

A strong mind to resist the impressions of war is necessary to allow a commander to excel in victory and survive in defeat. To not allow himself to become embroiled in the emotion, passion, and brutality of combat, the strategic commander requires an iron discipline which allows him to remain focused on the campaign. Although it is most natural for the commander to want to become involved in the tactical operation, whether at the decisive point or observing tactical operations through the “soda straw” view of a

Predator video stream, the strategic commander must retain the context and broad visualization of the campaign. The strategic commander cannot get so focused on one specific fight as to lose sight of the larger campaign. (p. 318)

The strategic commander who is responsible for the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines must be resilient, maintaining an impersonal detachment to the loss of life. The true test of the strategic commander is his ability to function with the loss of life, failure of the mission, and emotion of defeat that in the end defines the character of the commander. The strategic commander must be capable of bearing the burden of defeat on his shoulders alone with courage and determination. One of the finest examples of this trait is Field Marshall William Slim, Commander of the British 14th Army in Burma, who joined the Burma Corps during its 1000 mile retreat from Rangoon, Burma to Imphal, India. Throughout this long retreat, Field Marshall Slim, was able to maintain the coherency of the Army through sheer will and character. He provided the determination and purpose to retrain his Army and eventually forge it back into an effective fighting force. Slim's ability to remain operationally minded, not become fixated on losses of battles, and not take counsel of his fears allowed him to maintain the breadth and depth necessary to orchestrate the campaign which eventually resulted in the destruction of the Japanese Army in Burma. (Slim, William (1996). p.89.)

Strength of character is defined as the ability for a commander to make decisions based on his convictions and not to allow passion and strong emotions to upset his balance. A commander with strength of character understands the complexity and uncertainty in battle and only changes his conviction if he has strong evidence which

warrants a change. If the fog of battle has not lifted, then the commander must remain true to his conviction. To not execute his decision with all of his strength of will and determination will cause his force to flounder in indecisiveness and result in loss of the initiative. This is easier said than done. As Clausewitz stated, “In the dreadful presence of suffering and danger, emotion can easily overwhelm intellectual conviction, and in this psychological fog it is hard to form clear and complete insights that changes of view can become more understandable and excusable.” (Clausewitz, 108)

While a commander must be decisive in battle, he must also be flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions on the battlefield. He cannot blindly and willfully implement his decision if all indications are that the decision is wrong. An example of this is Napoleon’s campaign into Russia. Despite numerous victories over the Russian Army during his advance to Moscow, Napoleon was never able to bring the Russian Army to a decisive battle of annihilation. While the Russian Army continued to trade space for time, Napoleon pushed ever deeper into Russia eventually capturing an empty Moscow. Napoleon’s Grand Armee was decimated during its long retreat from Moscow during the Russian winter. Napoleon’s obstinacy and inability to assess the change in the situation led to disaster.

Military genius, imagination, presence of mind, and courage, are necessary traits of strategic commanders. Strength of will, strength of character, ambition, and the ability to resist the impressions of war are also required traits of the commander. These traits characterize intangibles a strategic commander must possess to be successful in a theater of war. While many of these intangible traits complement the competencies discussed for the strategic leader, they do not supplant their relevancy. A final concept to discuss is the

ability of the strategic leader to be “operationally minded” and to execute operational thinking.

The operationally minded commander is able to visualize the depth and breadth of the campaign. He is able to think at both the strategic and operational level of war. He can determine strategic objectives and visualize a campaign which will orchestrate tactical actions to achieve strategic success through operational art. The operational commander is able to refrain from evaluating tactical actions and remain focused at the operational and strategic level of war. Tactical commanders think in time and space of minutes and hours, areas of operation, weapons ranges, and movement rates. The strategic commander must think of time in terms of weeks and months. He must understand vast lands and oceans in terms of strategic impact. He must then orchestrate tactical actions within this vast space and time to create a campaign and exercise operational art. Failure to do so results in a series of disconnected tactical events which have no bearing on operational and strategic objectives. This failure leads to a failed mission. (Vega, Milan, (2000). p. 568-569)

The strategic commander is the pinnacle of his profession. He is a warfighter without peer. He is by virtue of being a commander, a strategic leader. However, the competencies which will make him successful as a strategic leader will not ensure success as a strategic commander. He must also be imbued with the intangible traits identified by Clausewitz and many others to ultimately succeed in war. The strategic commander is not born with these inane qualities. He develops them over the course of decades of study and experiences which create his ability to succeed as a war time commander. The strategic commander is developed through a comprehensive

combination of personal experience, self study, and institutional education. Once again, we come to the purpose of this monograph. As aforementioned, our current system trains, educates and promotes officers within their service. The services build officers to be strategic leaders reflective of their respective services needs. There is no specific route or education and experience model in which the goal is to produce a joint strategic commander.

That is not to say that there is no preparation for an officer to become more competent in joint operations; but, there are few mechanisms in which to educate and prepare an officer for joint duty. Unfortunately, this falls far short of the need to train and educate officers to be joint strategic and operational level commanders. To better understand how to prepare and assist an officer to develop the necessary joint strategic competencies, it is useful to look at some of the service preparation and experiential development of strategic leaders. While it may be constructive to assess preparation in a service environment, it may not be enough to assimilate core joint competencies. A myriad of factors impact the development of “jointness,” but few are as pervasive as the role of service culture. Consequently, we must evaluate the impediments to building a strategic joint commander to ascertain what hurdles must be overcome.

V. Hurdles, brick walls, and the like.

*The personality differences of the three American military Services are profound, pervasive, and persistent. Since these personalities are deeply embedded inside large military institutions, they will persist despite changes in administrations, the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs, and the joint of specified commands. They will even persist through the trauma of war. They affect how the services, in peacetime, perceive war, and then plan and buy and train forces. To understand the American military styles is to understand what is going on and much of what is likely to happen in the national security arena...” (Builder, Carl (1989), *The Mask of War*, p.5)*

Carl Builder’s study of the American military in *The Mask of War* is an outstanding look into our military service culture. Builder’s observations provide unique insights into the heritage, traditions, and characteristics which define the Army, Air Force, and Navy military service culture. Organizational culture dominates all aspect of the military, from how it fights, what is important, and most importantly, how it interacts with its fellow services. Competition for missions, roles, and most importantly, budget maintains the services in a constant state of rivalry for limited resources. More importantly, an understanding of service culture illuminates the difficulties and hurdles which must be overcome in order to develop the joint strategic commander.

The services’ culture is forged in over 200 year’s service to the Nation by the Army and Navy. While the Air Force’s service culture is much younger, it is no less pervasive. Service culture is the accumulation of not only the proudest moments, but also its darkest days. The collective experience of Pearl Harbor, Task Force Smith, Vietnam, the Chosin Reservoir, the Civil War, to name a few, weave a tapestry of experiences which embrace each member of their specific service. This shared, collective history is

the foundation of our services. The values and ethics built through the shared history are the essence of our service and its success. It is the heart of the service and the manifest responsibility of every strategic leader in their respective service to protect and propagate. It is not a mistake that the Army's description of an Army strategic leader in *Army Leadership* states one of the duties of an Army strategic leader is to sustain the Army's culture. (FM 6-22, p. 7-1)

Individual service cultures result in a state of competition among the services for roles, missions, and funding. Given this state of competition, it is little wonder that each service so closely guards its health and well-being. This competition often degraded service cooperation and often resulted in substandard performance. Although much less severe, this competition and protection of service culture can still be seen today. Tommy Franks discussed this issue when he took his plan for Afghanistan to the Tank. The Service Chiefs peppered Franks about his concept for Enduring Freedom. Franks wrote, "We endured half an hour of this aimless dialogue, a waste of time that neither the Secretary nor I could spare. The briefing had been intended to provide information on a campaign that CENTCOM had carefully and laboriously developed, with the inputs of our Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force, and Special Operations Component Commanders—three-star generals nominated by these Service Chiefs. *I had no tolerance for this parochial bullshit.*" (emphasis added)(Franks, p.276)

The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 was the stimulus which forced the services to reconstruct how they would interact with each other. 1986 was the beginning of a codified attempt to develop a joint culture while maintaining the individual strengths and

independence of each service. There is little wonder service culture identity has overshadowed a fledgling joint service culture.

Yet, constant advances can be seen in the development of the joint culture. Goldwater-Nichols provided a template to change the services attitude towards joint warfighting. The services' approach to warfighting has changed significantly over the past twenty years. From a time of open competition (Urgent Fury), to operational deconfliction (Desert Storm), to operational integration (Iraqi Freedom), the services now embrace joint operations as the default for doing business. Still, our inability or slowness to totally embrace jointness is manifested in many ways.

While each service works hard to fully develop its warfighting competencies, it is often done in competition with the joint community. A simple example is the fact that every service member serving in the joint community is essentially borrowed military manpower from their service. There is a constant tension between the service and the joint command the officer serves. Success in the joint world has little bearing to success in the service component. Rightly so, services, as a profession, must first ensure the officer has mastered the skills required in his service. Consequently, the average joint officer only serves approximately 2.6 years of a three year joint tour, ever cognizant that his joint time is required for possible promotion to general officer. (Snider, p.19)

While service culture is changing to accommodate the reality of jointness, it still proves an obstacle to training joint strategic commanders. Nevertheless, service culture is not an obstacle to be eliminated, but one to be embraced. It is the service culture of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines which has produced the finest military in the world. It is the capabilities and competencies that the joint strategic commander is entrusted to

properly employ and fight in combat. It is a culture which demands warfighting proficiency, requires officers spend their entire career preparing, training, educating, and self-developing to go to war on their watch. Failure, un-preparedness, and incompetence is neither tolerated nor a luxury which we can afford.

This brings us to another hurdle which must be vaulted. Service timelines provide little flexibility for officers to enhance their joint awareness and understanding. Every service's officer development time line is packed with education and experiential developmental milestones. The standard infantry officer in the Army spends the first ten years building his base of core competencies. In the first ten years of service, the typical infantry officer has spent six to seven years in tactical infantry units and two to three years in professional education. During his time as a captain in tactical infantry units, he has become "branch qualified" by demonstrating the mastery to lead and fight an infantry company. At the 10-12 year mark, the infantry officer will attend in intermediate level Command and General Staff College. Upon completion, he immediately returns to the line to become branch qualified as a field grade by demonstrating mastery as a battalion and brigade operations or executive officer. His first opportunity to serve in a joint command will probably come after branch qualification as a major. This very narrow window is only available to some officers as the Army is now in competition with the joint community for a qualified mid-grade professional.

At the 18 year mark, the successful infantry officer is probably commanding an infantry battalion. Upon successful completion of command, he most likely will attend a service War College and then be eligible once again to go to a joint assignment. If the officer is already joint qualified as a major, it is unlikely he will go back to a joint

command. The demand for post battalion command officers is high in the Army and his assignment will be closely monitored.

As you can see, a combat arms Army officer has essentially two opportunities to serve in a joint assignment before he reaches the rank of Colonel. This same confliction is found in Air Force and Naval officer time lines. The standard fighter pilot must go to his basic course and flight school; he then spends his time in operational flying assignments to develop air combat warfighting competencies. Next, he will attend a captain's career course and then return to a flying unit where he continues to master leadership and technical skill. Attendance at an intermediate command and staff college, service as a field grade in a squadron or ops group staff, followed by assignment to a MAJCOM headquarters staff, all competes with his ability to serve in a joint assignment.

The most restrictive timeline to serve in a joint billet is in the Navy. A young naval officer is expected to spend his time at sea to develop the naval warfighting skill and values required to sustain the profession. Consequently, the naval officer is normally at sea, or participating in work up to prepare his ship for its next mission. The technical nature of the naval surface warfare officer requires specific technical schooling, but mostly, requires hands on training replicated only by being at sea. Limited shore duty is spent working on his ship in dry dock or serving on a staff. Little time is apportioned to allow officers to serve in joint billets or to attend schooling.

Another obstacle to building the joint strategic commander is the service culture approach to professional education. As described in the timelines above, most officers who are on an appropriate promotion career path will attend specific professional schooling intended to prepare him for higher levels of responsibility. The criticality of

professional education cannot be understated. As Huntington observes, “The skill of an officer is neither a craft nor an art. It is instead an extraordinarily complex intellectual skill requiring comprehensive study and training.” (Huntington, p.13) The officer may spend as much as one third of his professional life receiving formal education. (p.13) Professional education remains a crucial building block for both the service and joint profession.

Despite the institutional commitment to education, each service approaches educational requirements differently. The Army has embraced professional education since the 1800s to enhance officer competency and sustain it during bleak budget years and low end strength. The Navy formalized their education process slightly after the Army and modeled it closely after the Army. However, as time has passed, the Army has maintained its commitment to education and uses selection for higher level education as a discriminator for promotion. Final formal education occurs at the War College in which officers who demonstrate potential to serve as future strategic leaders for the service are selected to attend.

The Air Force and Marines follow a very similar education process to develop highly competent warfighting professionals. It is here that the Navy tends to lag behind. Duties at sea require the Navy to limit the amount of time a naval officer spends away from sea. Naval officers attend only one school at the field grade level. They may attend the intermediate level command and staff college or wait and attend a War College as a senior naval officer. This would not appear to be a significant difference; however, when compared to the other services and the Marine Corps, the Navy provides significantly less

opportunities to develop joint strategic leader competencies in comparison to the other services.

A final roadblock to developing jointness is the sheer uniqueness of the environment in which the service professional operates. The complexity of ground, air and sea operations significantly challenge the officer's ability to contribute in each area. There is little debate when the quintessential warfighting professional is described as the one who can orchestrate the operations of air, ground, and naval forces in a successful campaign. The Navy is the most independent service and consequently, the most difficult service to instill a joint culture. Since its inception, the Navy has represented and enforced United States policy abroad - alone and independent. Naval forces are self contained and independent with assigned Marine forces for limited ground operations and an air wing for immediate offensive operations. Consequently, there is little inclination for naval officers to desire intimate knowledge of ground operations. Likewise, the Army officer has little incentive to understand all aspects of naval operations. The sheer peculiarities of the environment every officer is expected to master in his service bears little similarity to his fellow service officer. Consequently, jointness is often currently enhanced only in a service college environment.

Distinct and independent service cultures create a significant challenge to the development of the joint strategic commander. Similarly, service approach to education, service timelines for officer education and promotion, and the uniqueness of the warfighting environment produce a significant friction to expending energy, resources, and capital to develop the joint strategic leader and commander.

However, all is not lost. Recognition of a problem is the first step to creating a solution. Congress has identified our problem. It is incumbent upon the military service to develop a solution lest we allow Congress to do it for us. In order to overcome the impediments to developing a strategic joint commander, the unique service cultures cannot be fought. The relative newness of jointness and joint integration indicate we will never overcome the historical inculcation of over 200 years of developed individual service culture. Our separate service culture is what makes our military great. It is imperative we maintain our service culture as the foundation for warfighting; but, our jointness and joint culture must permeate all aspects of our services. Until a joint mentality is second nature, it will be extremely difficult to develop joint strategic commanders.

VI. Constructing the joint strategic commander and leader.

“Skilled officers, like all other professional men are products of continuous and laborious study, training, and experience. There is no shortcut to the peculiar type of knowledge and ability they must possess. Trained officers constitute the most vitally essential element in modern war, and the only one that under no circumstances can be improvised or extemporized.”

Douglas MacArthur, May 1932

The model to train and develop a strategic joint commander and leader is the same which is used to develop strategic leaders in each service. It is based on education, training, experience, and self-development. The goal in development of a joint strategic leader and commander must be to produce a commander who can influence people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the joint organization. The joint strategic commander must provide advice to the Commander in Chief on the use of diplomatic, informational, economic and military power to accomplish strategic objectives. The strategic and operational joint commander must be capable of orchestrating ground, air, and naval forces in a military campaign to achieve strategic objectives and defeat an enemy. He must demonstrate intangible traits of character, imagination, ambition, will, intellect, and be operationally minded in order to lead and inspire his forces and defeat the enemy in war. The joint strategic commander accomplishes all of this in an environment characterized by speed and volume of information, complexity, and uncertainty. Every decision and action is evaluated globally through a pervasive media apparatus. Fog and friction reign. An ever

tightening decision loop exacerbates the pressures of command. The unprepared joint strategic commander may find the proceeding conditions overwhelming.

The level of competency required to succeed as a joint strategic commander in this environment is difficult for even the most capable and prepared officer. It is suffocating to the officer who finds himself in the position but not prepared for the task. Given the daunting mission and the severe consequences of failure, every possibility must be explored to prepare and build the joint strategic commander of the 21st century.

Education is the first and most formidable method in which to begin shaping jointness, joint strategic leader competencies, and joint strategic commander traits. Education will allow officers to examine their own mental prejudices and service bias and open the door for a joint culture to permeate their thought and essence. For the purpose of this monograph, we will look at windows and opportunities to train, educate, expose, and provide experience to the joint strategic commander; but we will not develop the specific methodology to teach and train the individual competencies.

Junior officer education must remain solely focused on development of service professionals and instilling the values, tradition, and culture which make each respective service unique. However, many of the strategic leader competencies can be introduced at the earliest level, beginning with pre-commissioning. While this is sufficient to begin the process to develop a strategic leader, it is not where an officer begins his education in jointness.

The first major education opportunity is at the intermediate command and general staff college level. It is here, at the intermediate level school, that an officer will first be exposed to joint warfighting in a class room environment. The focus of intermediate

education is warfighting in the context of the operational art (CJCSI 1800.01B, 2004).

Currently, each of the intermediate schools exchanges a limited number of officers to experience education at a sister service intermediate command and staff college.

Instruction at the intermediate school is first and foremost focused at producing mid level commanders and competent general staff officers. Service intermediate level schools are also chartered to provide Joint Professional Military Education Phase I. Each service teaches joint operations from the standpoint of the individual Service's force within a joint force. While receiving JPME I is a good introduction to joint operations, it is not sufficient to begin instilling a joint mind set.

To instill a joint mindset, several areas must be changed at intermediate education institutions. First, student participation levels from sister services must be increased. Closer interaction with fellow officers from sister services begin the process of instilling a joint mindset. Next, change the composition of the faculty to reflect sister service participation levels. Maximize use of retired officers who have significant joint experience. Increase the number of sister service instructors. If the primary service / sister service breakdown is seventy/ thirty or even sixty/ forty, try to match the instructor ratio. Every occasion an officer interacts with a fellow officer from another service is the opportunity to develop a greater appreciation. Finally, center all tactical and operational instruction in a joint warfighting environment. Force officers to learn in the terms in which we fight today – joint.

Another great opportunity at the intermediate college level occurs at the Joint Forces Staff College. This joint opportunity was offered this year for the first time. The Joint Advanced Warfighting School (JAWS) is designed to immerse students into

joint operational art and national security strategy. The long term goal of JAWS is to provide graduates to the joint community with a uniform understanding and appreciation of joint warfighting and joint operational art. The immersion of officers for an entire year into joint warfighting and operational art is an experience not replicated in any of our intermediate level colleges or even at the war college level. This approach is a major step to breaking down service barriers and instilling a joint mindset to warfighting.

Today, JAWS is taught as a mixed senior service school and intermediate college school equivalent. While there is great merit in this method, a more appropriate approach may be feasible. Currently, majors attend JAWS in lieu of attending their or another service's intermediate level college. Consequently, these great officers often arrive without having mastered their service specific skills required to function as a junior field grade in their service. At the same time, they are thrust into an advanced warfighting course designed to produce operational and strategic planners for the combatant commanders and Joint Staff. A more appropriate method may be to send majors to JAWS after completing an intermediate level staff college. This will put a JAWS graduate on par with a SAMS, SAWS, or SAAS graduate. One of the major detractors of this recommendation is the timeline availability of a naval officer to attend two years of school. If the Navy cannot find an additional year to attend school, then all consideration should be given to sending naval officers to the course and receive credit for their intermediate level schooling. It is imperative that the Navy is represented in the premier joint operational warfighting course.

Senior Service Level Colleges provide the primary mechanism to train strategic leaders for the services. The National Defense University is the premier service college

to train joint strategic leaders. However, by this time, leaders exhibiting senior leadership potential have been exposed to many of the senior leader competencies required at the strategic level. The senior service colleges provide the means to train officers for “high-level policy, command and staff responsibilities by educating them in the diplomatic, economic, military, and informational dimensions on strategy formulation, implementation and campaigning.” (CJCSI 1800.01B, p. E-D-1)

Currently, only the National Defense University provides Joint Military Professional Education Level II. This is not sufficient to develop enough strategic leaders for the joint force who are operationally minded and proficient in orchestrating all service components in a campaign. It is time to change the focus of our senior service colleges. Senior service colleges must provide a foundation and sustainment for the joint strategic leader. By this stage, many of the officers at service specific senior staff colleges have completed a joint tour. If they have not, it is imperative they leave the service college with an understanding and complete appreciation for joint warfighting, national security strategy, and a joint mindset.

First, senior service colleges must be authorized to award JPME II. Developing the curriculum to support this is not a major issue. The requirements are already established. The National Defense University already has an approved program. The service war colleges can transition to this instruction. However, to instill a joint appreciation and mindset, service college attendance for sister services and faculty ratios must be addressed. A 60 / 40 ratio of service to sister service officer attendance has been deemed appropriate in order to qualify the officer in JPME II. This immediately qualifies

officers to be assigned in a COCOM. Consequently, senior leaders will no longer need to be sent to the Joint Combined Warfighting School Senior Course for JPME II.

Another consideration would be an evolutionary change to the JAWS course. As stated previously, JAWS graduates both intermediate and senior college graduates. If JAWS is changed to provide a second year course for majors, then an excellent opportunity is presented to create a specific joint senior service college course designed to produce joint planners for the combatant commander. Post battalion and squadron level commanders are the target audience for this course and the student would receive senior service college credit upon graduation. This course would more appropriately deal with the skill sets required by COCOM planners. The course could be modeled after the Army's Advanced Operational Arts Studies Fellowship. The benefit this provides is to allow a more specific focus to developing the skills necessary in the senior planner. The impact the JAWS program can have in the joint community cannot be understated. SAMS, SAWS, and SAAS graduates now form the core of planners throughout the services. They impact all aspects of the services with a common lexicon, creative problem solving, shared experiences, and an in-depth knowledge of the operational art that makes them impact players wherever they serve. They have been the driving force behind every major war plan since Just Cause. JAWS provides the same potential for the joint force.

Formal joint officer education lays the bedrock foundation for development of the joint strategic leader. The education process helps develop an appreciation for fellow officers in sister services and the specific capability they bring to the fight. Both intermediate and senior service level colleges develop the officer in joint operational art

and an operational mindset. The war colleges specifically develop and refine officer skills in national security strategy and the use of national elements of power. The education process also assists officers in becoming more culturally savvy because it exposes them to all services, some international officers and limited interagency students. While formal education breaks down service barriers and begins to build a joint mindset, alone, it will not accomplish the mission of developing a joint strategic leader and commander.

Training experience can provide an excellent median in which to develop an appreciation for joint capabilities. Joint integration on the battlefield between services is no longer an anomaly. Today, the effects of joint integration are felt from the company level up to the COCOM. Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines do not think twice to see a sister service providing a significant capability to their fight on the battlefield. Since it is happening in combat, it is important to aggressively seek these opportunities in training.

A primary opportunity for training in a joint environment is at the Army's Combat Training Centers at Fort Polk, Fort Irwin, and Fort Leavenworth. Likewise, the same opportunity is available at the Marine training center in Twenty-nine Palms. Air combat is trained at Red Flag in Nellis AFB for the Air Force and Navy Strike University in Fallon, Nevada. Each training center has been specifically focused to training service specific warfighting competencies under the toughest conditions. This must remain the purpose of each training center. However, these training centers must transform to meet the realities of the battlefield.

Services must begin a warfighting exchange program at all the ground training centers. For example, a Marine battalion should go to JRTC or NTC and participate as an attached battalion in a Brigade Combat Team during a rotation. An Army battalion should train at 29 Palms as an attachment to a Marine regiment. Naval air squadrons already participate in exercises at Red Flag, and air force fighter squadrons fight with Naval aviation at Naval Strike University. While the air is well on its way to joint integration at the respective training centers, an even more aggressive approach can be adopted. The greater the integration, then the better an appreciation is gained for each services capability. Jointness becomes a habit as officers work side by side with their counterparts in a tactical warfighting environment. This is an essential step in developing the experience base and tactical proficiency of future strategic leaders and commanders. More importantly, although the junior officers gain an appreciation for the other service, the true target of the exchange is the lieutenant colonel and colonel commanders who now gain significant hands on warfighting experience with a fellow service. Jointness begins to permeate the service culture.

Tactical staffs, from brigade to division, can be trained at the Battle Command Training Center or the Joint Warfighting Center. The Marines conduct the same training for Marine senior commanders and staffs at the MAGTF Staff Training Program. This evaluated learning experience allows commanders and staffs to operate large formations in major battles and engagements in an intense combat simulation. Staffs are required to interact, conduct military decision making, and coordinate, with sister service staffs. For example, cross-attachment, employment of assets, back briefs, exchange of liaisons, and staff coordination demand a greater understanding and appreciation by staff officers and

commanders for other service capabilities. Additionally, this environment helps train the commander's mental agility, cross cultural savvy, and warfighting skills. This training event allows a future strategic commander to condition his mind to resist the impressions of war, sift through the fog of information abundance, and demonstrate his strength of mind. The entire time he fights, he also develops an appreciation for the joint force.

Total immersion training by some officers will provide incredible benefits to jointness. Due to the numerous Joint Task Forces which have been activated since 9-11, some Corps Headquarters have initiated an officer exchange program with sister services. This initiative allows the Corps Headquarters to develop and train to become a joint task force headquarters prior to going to combat. This practice should be codified.

Appropriate exchange programs should be established to allow services to embed within another service's staff for a two-year tour. All services should participate in this program and it can be focused at the three star general or admiral level staff. Once again, this reinforces joint integration and how we are fighting in reality on the ground. It continues to break down cultural bias as the best and brightest represent their service on a different service's tactical staff.

The final pillar of professional development is self-development. While this is the most difficult to follow, it also offers some of the greatest potential for growth.

Obviously, officers should have a designated reading program that assists in developing strategic leader and commander competencies. A prime example of that today is the current NDU and Representative Ike Skelton sponsored reading program in which officers have a standardized reading list and have on-line chat room discussions to

discuss the book. This provides a great opportunity for officers and a mechanism for officers to maintain their ties to the joint community through the discussions.

An even more promising and interesting self-development process is networked individual warfighting simulations. Dr. James Schneider, a permanent instructor at SAMS, writes, “It is possible to imagine a persistent virtual military world in which an officer...becomes part of a massively networked digital society with a full fledged economic, political, and military system.” (Schneider, James (2005) p.22) The officer is then exposed to scenarios that allow him to problem solve in an ambiguous, dynamic, complex environment. He has the tools of all services at his disposal and all the elements of national power. Competency gates can be added to provide feedback to the officer and strengthen weaknesses the officer has exhibited.

In the science fiction novel, *Ender's Game*, Ender is selected as a youth for advanced military training. For years, Ender is exposed to tactical operations until he progresses to operational and strategic problems. He is exposed to galactic problems through simulations to enhance his decision making, leadership, ability to deal with fog and friction, and rapid decision loops. Ender's training continues on for years. Finally, he faces his greatest exercise. He fights his force to save the world from annihilation and wins. Through the entire fight, Ender believes it is only another simulation yet in actuality, he saved humankind. (Card, Orson Scott (1991))

The capability to train Ender is present today. World wide networked computer game competitions demonstrate this fact. No service is willing to surrender its training to software designers. Nor do we want to mirror the French Army of 1940 - trained and indoctrinated in all the wrong strategic assumptions. However, we do want to provide

avenues for officers to expand their knowledge of joint warfighting, develop operational and strategic decision making skills, and develop creative problem-solving. The service and joint community can benefit from this world wide gaming capability now.

Simulations with ground, naval, and air forces reinforce a joint mindset. Operations in major theaters of war instill an operational art mindset. Self-development through reading and simulation provides a major catalyst to develop joint strategic leaders. It allows officers to think broadly and develop a vision. It trains and strengthens the officer's mind to solve problems in a time constrained environment. It trains the officer to unconsciously think joint.

Education, training and experience, and self-development provide the pillars to developing joint strategic leaders and commanders. Formal education is used to infuse a joint culture into the officer. Formal education helps train the officer's mind for operational and strategic problems and develops an operational mindset. They are formally trained in campaign planning and operational art. JAWS demonstrates incredible potential to provide premier operationally minded officers to the COCOMs and Joint Staff similar to SAMS, SAWS, and SAAS. Training and experience develops an expectation of joint integration and jointness down to the tactical level through unit, staff and officer exchanges in tactical warfighting scenarios. Training at the services warfighting centers allows officers to develop warfighting traits and wrestle with the fog and friction of simulated combat in a joint environment. Finally, self-development continues to develop and reinforce an officer's mental tools and development as a leader and commander.

VII. Conclusion

In World War II, great captains like Admiral Chester Nimitz, Admiral Ernest King, General George Marshall, General Dwight Eisenhower, and General Douglas MacArthur led our military forces to strategic victory. Our operations were joint, combined, and all elements of national power were synchronized because we could not afford to do otherwise. Joint, combined operations were not something our military had discussed or trained at prior to going to war against the Japanese and Nazis. Our military was in such a state of disrepair that few officers had ever handled formations in the field. The environment was unforgiving and our national survival was at stake. Our strategic leaders and commanders demonstrated a level of competence and capability that is difficult to fathom but failure was not an option. How did these great captains achieve such a high level of strategic competence?

Nearly sixty years later the United States military conducts a war in two theaters of operations with global impact in an inherently joint and combined environment. Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom illustrate a display of competence we have come to expect of our strategic leaders. Today's environment is significantly different from the conditions strategic leaders operated in during World War II. Political and military complexity on the battlefield is the norm. Joint and combined operations are the base line. Unlike World War II, globalization and interdependence produce second and third order effects around the world when we conduct military operations. Information technology and global media continue to shrink the world to the television set in the room.

Our strategic leaders are faced with a myriad of challenges that are complex, interconnected, and dynamic. The information age environment is fast, agile, and unforgiving. Have we provided the joint strategic leader and commander with the tools necessary to succeed in this setting? Although our strategic leaders are succeeding today, evidence would suggest our procedures and processes have not changed as fast as the environment in which we operate.

It is imperative we provide the necessary tools and skills to the joint strategic leader and commander to succeed in this complex environment. Strategic leader competencies of identity, mental, agility, cross-cultural savvy, interpersonal maturity, world class warrior, and professional astuteness must be developed throughout a career. Intangible traits of imagination, ambition, character, will, and operational mindedness must be developed throughout an officer's career. Training of some strategic leader competencies may begin as early as pre-commissioning and commissioning. Officers must develop through formal education, training and experience, and self-development over an entire career. Officers must learn to think joint intuitively and to be comfortable operating with coalition and inter-agencies.

Officers who spend a lifetime developing the skills to be a joint strategic leader and commander will find them selves prepared to win anywhere, under any conditions. Today, as in the past, anything less is to fail their duty to the Nation.

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